Australian Bureau of Statistics

1380.0.55.008 - Perspectives on Regional Australia: Business Owners in Regions, 2011

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High proportion of business owners in regional areas

A report released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has found that the proportion of business owners is especially high in regions outside of Australian greater capital cities.

Director of Rural and Regional Statistics, Ms Lisa Conolly said that in 2009-10, there were approximately one in every seven Australians receiving income from running their own unincorporated business, but the percentage in some regions was much higher with almost one in five income earners outside the capital cities being business owners.

"We found that Darling Downs - Maranoa, a rural region in south-eastern Queensland, had the highest proportion of business owners, with almost a third (32%) of income earners there receiving income from an unincorporated business.

"This was closely followed by Western Australia's Wheat Belt, where 31 per cent of income earners were business owners.

"For some of these people, running their own business is a second job or a way to supplement other income, but for others their business is the main source of income.

"Our latest Census data shows that about 850,000 Australians run a business as their main job.

"The majority of these business owners were males (66%) and tended to be older than the general working population, with a median age of 47 years, compared to 40 for the average worker, " Ms Conolly said.

The report found that the three main industries that business owners worked in were: construction; agriculture, forestry, and fishing; and professional, scientific and technical services.

Further information can be found in Perspectives on Regional Australia: Business Owners in Regions, 2011 (cat. no. 1380.0.55.008), available for free download from the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au). Business owner data from Estimates of Personal Income for Small Areas, 2009-10 (cat. no. 6524.0.55.002) and from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing are provided for each region in the data cube accompanying this release.

Media notes:

· Business owners refers to:

a) people who earned income from an Own Unincorporated Business income source in the 2009-10 financial year; or
b) people whose main job in the week before the 2011 Census, was as an owner-manager of an unincorporated business.

· Unless otherwise indicated, regions in this media release refer to Statistical Areas Level 4, which were designed to represent labour markets or groups of labour markets.
· When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as the source.

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